DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 223 232 IR 010 483

AUTHOR Russell, Anne L.
TITLE Why Use Media Materials in University Instruction? Personal Beliefs of Selected Professors.
PUB DATE May 82
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, Research and Theory Division (Dallas, TX, May 1982). For other papers, see IR 010 442-487.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Audiovisual Aids; *Audiovisual Instruction; College Faculty; *College Instruction; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; *Instructional Materials; *Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Developed Materials; Teaching Methods; Use Studies
IDENTIFIERS *AECT Research and Theory Division Meeting; Australia

ABSTRACT

Personal beliefs concerning the use of media materials in university instruction were examined in this descriptive, interview-based study of 10 selected university professors. Hour-long interview tapes were content analyzed to discover reasons why these university professors chose to support their verbal lectures with media materials. Though 70 percent of the respondents were untrained in instructional media use, all felt media materials are essential for effective teaching; e.g., they provide variety, change of pace, and focus for transferring conceptual information in a manner that caters to individual student learning styles, and the media experiences shared by the entire class provide valuable discussion starters. Respondents' preference for using personally developed media materials has important implications for financial administrators, instructional media center directors, media librarians, and educational technologists. Funds and facilities should be allocated to enable teaching faculty members to produce personally relevant media materials to integrate within their instruction. This report includes 12 references. (Author/LMM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED223232

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Why use Media Materials in University Instruction? - Personal Beliefs of Selected Professors.

by Anne L. Russell
Kelvin Grove College of Advanced Education,
Brisbane, Australia.

Paper for presentation to the
Research and Theory Division of A.E.C.T.,
Dallas, Texas, May 6, 1982.

IR010483

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Michael Simonson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ABSTRACT

This descriptive, interview-based study of twenty selected university professors portrays personal beliefs concerning the use of media materials in university instruction.

Hour-long interview tapes were content analysed to discover reasons why these university professors choose to support their verbal lectures with media materials.

Though 70% of the respondents are untrained in instructional media use, all feel media materials are essential for effective teaching. Media materials provide variety, change of pace, and focus for transferring conceptual information in a manner that caters to individual student learning styles. The common experiences shared by the entire class provide valuable discussion starters.

Respondents' preference for using personally developed media materials has important implications for financial administrators, instructional media center directors, media librarians and educational technologists. Funds and facilities should be allocated to enable teaching faculty members to produce personally relevant media materials to integrate within their instruction.

Why do individuals use media materials in their university instruction? My descriptive study reports an examination of the perspectives of twenty selected university media users. The complete study (Russell, 1981) involved an analysis of personal perceptions as to why, what, when, and how media materials are used in university instruction.

This paper will report findings related to the first of these four questions; namely 'why use media materials in university instruction?'.

The media materials identified for the study are limited to electronically augmented materials such as overhead transparencies, slides, 16mm films, 8mm films, filmstrips, videotapes, audiotapes, computers, and combinations of these formats.

Rationale for the study

Research concerning the use of media materials to enhance learning has provided contradictory evidence as to their effectiveness in the learning process (Campeau, 1974; Jamison, Suppes, and Wells, 1974; Parkhurst, 1975; and, Schramm, 1977). While researchers look for evidence of media effectiveness an important variable seems to have been overlooked -- the teacher.

I believe the ways a teacher presents information to learners can influence the use and effectiveness of media materials in an instructional situation.

Some researchers (Tobias, 1966, 1969; Armsey and Dahl, 1973; Purdy, 1973, 1975; Dodge,1974; and Schramm, 1977) have studied teachers involved in mediated or programmed instruction; my interests concern those teachers who integrate media materials within their personal lecture presentations. Why do these teachers believe media materials need to be integrated into their personal verbal presentation?

Methodology

Only faculty members at the University of Oregon who were known to use media materials frequently in their instruction were selected to participate in this study. In consultation with the staff of the Instructional Media Center and students from many subject areas in the University, I formulated a list of faculty members who use media materials in their instruction. Individuals who taught less than three courses during the academic year and who were not full time faculty members were eliminated from the list; graduate teaching fellows and tutors were also eliminated.

I selected twenty professors, one from each of the following subject departments of the University of Oregon: Anthropology, Architecture, Art Education, Art History, Biology, Dance, Education, Education Policy and Management, Film and Television Studies, Geography, German, Health Education, History, Journalism, Marketing, Music, Psychology, Recreation and Park Management, Sociology, and Spanish.

Profile of the study group

Teaching status: The respondents comprised: one senior instructor, seven assistant professors, six associate professors, and six full professors.

Sex: The study group approximated the ratio of male and female faculty members at the University of Oregon -- sixteen males (80%) and four females (20%) took part in the study.

Age: The ages of the respondents ranged from early thirties to early sixties.

Academic qualifications: Fourteen (70%) of the respondents have Ph.D. or Ed.D. degrees.

Number of years teaching in higher education: The average number

of years respondents have taught at college or university level is 15 years. Every respondent had taught at this level for at least four years.

Academic preparation in media production or use: Six (30%) of the respondents have formal training in media production, or the use of media materials for education.

Location: The University of Oregon is a research oriented university where faculty members are required to publish books and articles in quality research journals, in addition to normal university teaching, advising, and committee responsibilities. At the time of the study the University was suffering large financial cuts and this factor was frequently mentioned by the study group when discussing costs and quality of university facilities affecting their use of media materials in instruction.

Development of the data gathering instruments

A combination of questionnaire and personal interview was used to collect data for this descriptive study. The questionnaire and interview schedule were each developed specifically for this study.

The self-administered questionniare was presented to each respondent at an initial twenty minute interview. The responses provided basic information related to the background experiences of the respondents concerning their training in, and use of media.

The main (hour long) interview was recorded on audiotape. This interview was designed to encourage respondents to explore and report their reasons for developing instructional strategies that require the use of media materials.

In relation to the general question 'why use media materials?' I asked

specific questions pertaining to (1) early media related influences, (2) non-teaching media experiences, (3) preferred instructional strategies, (4) beliefs about student learning, and (5) media as a communication tool.

The question sequence of the main interview was flexible in order to accomodate the natural direction of conversation. All questions were covered in each interview.

Both the questionnaire and main interview schedule were pilot tested and revised.

Analysis of the data

The data collected from the questionnaires were translated into frequencies and averages. The tape-recorded interviews were systematically analysed and interpreted through content analysis. The content analysis was carried out by:

1. Listening to each of the tapes and transcribing significant information to provide part-transcripts approximately sixteen pages in length.
2. The part-transcripts were analysed for content pertaining to the questions posed to the respondents.
3. This content was further categorized into sub-headings pertaining to each interview question.

The findings

The findings are best reported in the words of the respondents. Words of wisdom and enthusiasm came in all directions in the twenty interviews. Though 70% of the respondents were untrained in media use, their gut level response to my questions produced some textbook statements regarding the theory of media materials use in instruction.

The selected professors reported a personal need to integrate media materials into their instruction. The content analysis of the

main interviews revealed the following typical comments and specific insights concerning why these professors elect to use media materials within their personal lecture presentation.

1. Early media-related influences:

> I guess I would have benefitted with some formal training in (use of media). Maybe I would have run on to these things a long time ago. I assume that there are some things that I am doing now that I can improve on if I had some assistance.

Present use of media materials does not necessarily stem from training in production and/or use of media materials.

> I can't remember being influenced by a professor. But I can see where instruction I had along the way would have been enhanced by media. I am quite visual.

Present use of media materials does not necessarily stem from influences of a powerful role model.

2. Non-teaching media experiences:

> My use of radio and television (for pleasure) has a lot to do with two things. The content of what I am presenting, because I am kind of like a sponge . . . I am absorbing things and wondering how I can use them. From the content standpoint the media provides me with a lot of information. Secondly, the manner of presentation. If I see something in a film that I really like in the terms of technique I wonder how I could ever use that. Is there some way that I could copy that or adapt it, or adjust it? . . . I am constantly looking for examples.

Mass media can be a source for instructional and informational ideas, and present awareness of current public interest in related subject areas.

> Slide taking I think for me and a lot of architects has gotten to be like note taking or sketching used to be. Its quicker and less edited, actually that's also its weakness. . . I take slides according to whim and feeling. . . I take slides of anything that occurs to me to be a good slide to have. I sometimes do that methodologically but not usually. Usually I take them and then make sense out of them later.

Slides taken for recreational purposes are likely to be incorporated in class instruction.

3. Preferred instructional strategies:

> Media gives variety and excitement to a class that books and lectures alone don't give.

Media materials can provide variety or change of pace.

> My class happens to be one hour and twenty minutes long which is a long haul for anybody to talk. I have discovered that if I use a film in that class period it gives focus to discussion. I can use that as one of a variety of things I want to do during a given class session.

Media materials can provide a focus for concepts being taught.

Media materials can be used as building blocks to build on basic information provided by the teacher.

> I have become more and more aware -- the longer I teach, the more material is sent to me. The more things are not so awesome. If I have taught a class one or two times I have a certain foundation to it and I am always looking for new things. As you teach longer you start to become aware of more resources.

Media-related instructional strategies are continually explored, developed and refined by each teacher to develop a personal repetoire of successful media-related instructional strategies.

> Teaching is like a performance, and that is why media has to be used, you are a performer every time you get up to teach. I am a perfectionist so I want those performances to be not just good but excellent, and unless you come across with some stimulating information it is not going to be that. It is a performance and media is one of the supporting characters. It helps you a lot -- it levels -- there are some days when you don't really have the energy for teaching in the late afternoon -- media can pick you up and the class up.

Media-related instructional strategies are accommodated to parallel personal beliefs about teaching.

4. Beliefs about student learning:

> The more variety you can get in the materials that you use, the more opportunities that something will really click with the students. . . Visual and audio combinations of materials are processed differently. Some people relate very strongly to visual imagery.

The use of media materials can enhance instructional strategies in order to cater to the individual learning styles of students.

> Whenever I think about media and teaching . . . I think about the little exposure or opportunity for most students to see dances of other cultures. . . To be able to go into a culture and see a dance from the way the people who created that form see it. At least as close as we can when you think you see it through the eye of the camera and not as a person sitting next to and feeling the body heat of somebody else.

The use of media materials can provide the opportunity to simulate reality for students.

5. Media as a communication tool:

> I use media to present a large amount of information that then becomes common to the group . . . I can assume a certain common experience from which to launch.

Media materials can provide common experiences to be shared by the entire class.

> Media tends to become very passive if you let it. . . (In a class) I ensure that there is time for the expressive part that follows the receptive part. Just the passive receptiveness (of media) is very limiting. Films, like television, are experienced by receptors on the brain . . . I think that they are received differently if there is an expectation that there is going to be a response to (the media presentation). I try to take care of the other side of communication by expecting the student to follow up and to evaluate or respond in some way. Films then do not become entertainment -- but become part of a communication process which is going to require something (of the students) by way of language expression.

Media materials can provide passive stimuli to be followed by active student expression.

> Media materials give a tremendous amount of control. You control the information that is there, you control the emotional tone, you capture the students' sensory systems. . . When you darken the room and you present two sensory modes at the same time, you have captured the person and you essentially control (the information flow). It also moves fast enough so that continuous attention is necessary.

Media materials can regulate the flow of information within the classroom.

> Use of media demonstrates I am thinking ahead and trying to figure out ways of making subject matter interesting.

The presence of media materials in instruction can indicate teacher preparation and concern for the student learning situation.

Discussion

Though the results of this research study cannot be generalised beyond the selected professors at the University of Oregon, certain factors pertaining to why media materials are used in instruction can

be discussed. What should be done about those teachers who do not use media materials in instruction?

Professors who use media materials to supplement their verbal instruction tend to use personally developed materials inspired by their non-teaching media-related experiences. They feel comfortable using these materials as extensions of themselves. Should all teachers be encouraged to use media materials, even if they do not feel comfortable doing so?

In spite of a lack of formal educational technology courses these professors intuitively believe each learner processes information differently, and therefore the use of media materials will provide the best instructional situation for a variety of learners. Should teachers who do not use media materials be encouraged to take educational technology courses?

The respondents of this study have developed their skills over many years of teaching and seem to be aware of the need to use each media format for a specific instructional purpose. Is it possible to identify specific media formats appropriate to specific instructional instances?

Implications

Interviews with professors, from a variety of subject areas, who frequently use media materials, have provided insights into why media materials are used in their university instruction. Implications from this study are relevant for teachers, university and college administrators, media center directors, media librarians, educational technologists, and media researchers.

1. Teachers from a variety of subject areas should consider the use of media materials for improving their instruction and subsequent student learning.
2. University and college administrators should consider funding projects related to media production where the teachers are to

be involved in the production process.

3. Media center directors should consider offering extensive production services, support staff, and workshops to help teachers produce personally relevant media materials.
4. Media librarians should consider purchasing fewer commercial media kits for the use of faculty and, instead, provide financial support for the purchase of raw materials such as film, acetate sheets, videotapes, etc. (This does not negate the need for commercially produced media kits suitable for individual student study and enrichment.)
5. Educational technologists should be directed by insights from this and similar studies as they consult with, or teach, higher education faculty.
6. Media researchers should replicate this study in other university and college situations in order to support the conclusions presented in this study. (The study has been replicated at a community college in Oregon (Garrison, 1981). The results support the findings reported here.)

In conclusion, attention should be given to provide opportunities for teaching faculty to produce personally relevant media materials to integrate within their instruction.

REFERENCES

Armsey, J.W. and Dahl, N.C. An inquiry into the uses of instructional technology. N.Y., Ford Foundation Report, 1973.

Campeau, R.L. Selective review of the results of research on the use of audiovisual media to teach adults. AV Communications Review, 1974, 22(1):5-30.

Dodge, M, et al. How teachers perceive media. Educational Technology, 1974, 14:21-24.

Garrison, J. (personal communication, masters thesis in progress) University of Oregon, College of Education, 1981.

Jamison, D., Suppes, P., and Wells, S. The effectiveness of alternative instructional media: A survey. Review of Educational Research, 1974, 44:1-69.

Parkhurst, P.E. Generating meaningful hypotheses with aptitude-treatment interactions. AV Communications Review, 1975, 23(2):171-183.

Purdy, N.L. A case study of acceptance and rejection of innovation by faculty in a community college. Ed.D. dissertation, University of California, 1973.

Purdy, N.L. Community college instructors and the use of new media: Why some do and others don't. Educational technology, 1975, 15(3):9-12.

Russell, A.L. The use of media materials in instruction as reported by selected faculty of the University of Oregon. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oregon, 1981.

Schramm, W. The researcher and the producer in ETV. Public Telecommunications Review, 1977, 5(4):11-21.

Tobias, S. Lack of knowledge and fear of automation as factors in teachers' attitudes toward programmed instruction and other media. AV Communications Review, 1966, 14:99-109.

Tobias, S. Effects of attitudes to programmed instruction and other media on achievement from programmed materials. AV Communications Review, 1969, 17:199-206.